

Third, there is no reason in the world for the taxpayers' money and court resources to be wasted by allowing the review of any convicted felons' application to get their guns back. It made no sense for ATF to take agents away from their important law enforcement work, and it makes even less sense for the courts, which have no experience or expertise in this area, to be burdened with this unnecessary job. Let me make this point perfectly clear: It was never our intent, nor is it now, for the courts to review a convicted felon's application for firearm privilege restoration.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator for clearly laying out the facts. As the coauthor of this provision, I share his interest and concern about this issue. I agree with his analysis completely and intend to closely follow this situation in the coming year to see if any further legislation is necessary to clarify our intent. I would also like to take this opportunity to let my colleague know how much I enjoyed working on this issue with him as well as so many other matters. I want to ensure him that although he will not be here next year to continue his work in the Senate on this matter, I fully intend to carry on the fight for us both.

FLEXIBILITY FOR TELECOMMUTING CENTERS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, in an effort to meet the changing needs of the Federal work force, I rise in support of a provision contained in the Treasury postal appropriations bill which authorizes the General Services Administration to begin work on a series of flexiplace work telecommuting centers.

Currently, many Federal employees from both the legislative and executive branches are enjoying the convenience and efficiency of six completed telecommuting centers located throughout the Metropolitan Washington, DC area.

While Federal employees enjoy the advantages of working at these telecommuting centers, their employer, the Federal Government, reaps the benefits of increased productivity and improved work quality.

As the Senate accepts the important responsibility to reign in Federal spending and control our Federal debt, we surely realize that these telecommuting centers must be economically self-supporting or they will not succeed.

For that reason, I, along with my friend in the House of Representatives, Congressman FRANK WOLF, have asked our respective Appropriations Committees to insert language granting much needed flexibility to the General Services Administration in regard to telecommuting centers.

In order to maintain these centers as self-sufficient entities, the Congress must allow non-Federal employees to fill any vacant slots in the telecommuting centers. Currently, Federal employees cannot fill all of the slots all of the time, so it only makes sense to allow non-Federal employees utilize

these facilities and increase the revenue going to these important centers.

This legislation also permits the Administrator of General Services Administration to transfer control of any or all of the telecommuting centers to State, local, or nonprofit organizations. This step will further ensure the economic viability of these telecommuting centers.

While maintaining the necessary commitments to our Federal work force, this language will provide the necessary flexibility to let these telecommuting centers thrive and prosper without Federal micromanagement and increased Government spending.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 2 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

U.S. FOREIGN OIL CONSUMPTION: HERE IS WEEKLY BOX SCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute reports that for the week ending September 6, the United States imported 7,400,000 barrels of oil each day, 1,300,000 less than the 8,700,000 imported during the same week a year ago.

Nevertheless, Americans relied on foreign oil for 53 percent of their needs last week, and there are no signs that the upward spiral will abate. Before the Persian Gulf war, the United States obtained about 45 percent of its oil supply from foreign countries. During the Arab oil embargo in the 1970's, foreign oil accounted for only 35 percent of America's oil supply.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil—by U.S. producers using American workers? Politicians had better ponder the economic calamity sure to occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply—or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 7,400,000 barrels a day.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, September 10, the Federal debt stood at \$5,217,211,394,956.03.

Five years ago, September 10, 1991, the Federal debt stood at \$3,617,377,000,000.

Ten years ago, September 10, 1986, the Federal debt stood at \$2,103,341,000,000.

Fifteen years ago, September 10, 1981, the Federal debt stood at \$979,625,000,000.

Twenty-five years ago, September 10, 1971, the Federal debt stood at \$415,728,000,000. This reflects an in-

crease of more than \$4 trillion (\$4,801,483,394,956.03) during the 25 years from 1971 to 1996.

ZION NO. 1, MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH 126TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. HEFLIN. Mr. President, on Sunday, August 11, 1996, the Zion No. 1, Missionary Baptist Church celebrated its 126th anniversary. Zion No. 1 was formed in 1870, only a few miles from its present location in Barton, AL. It is one of the oldest in the State of Alabama.

Arthur Barton, a white landowner, donated the land for this church as a gift to its organizers, who had a phenomenal zeal for worshipping God. The church they built stood for many years. A second building, home of the Pine Grove Methodist Episcopal Church, located on a hill just off Highway 72 in west Colbert County, was purchased from the Methodist Conference by the small Zion No. 1 congregation in 1891 for \$300.

This church building was held together by wooden pegs. It is reported that there are no nails in the building. Kerosene or coal oil lamps were used for light. Two enormous pillars were visible in the center of the sanctuary running from the floor to the ceiling. These are still in place today.

During the Civil War, the Pine Grove Methodist Episcopal Church building had been used as a temporary hospital for wounded soldiers. It is said that two cannon balls were found in the walls as a result of a battle which took place between the town of Barton and the Tennessee River. There were blood stains on the floor and on portions of its baseboards and gunshot holes were visible in the walls. The basic structure which exists today remains largely as it was when it was constructed before the Civil War. Subsequent renovations have hidden evidence that it was once a hospital and church for wounded Confederate soldiers.

In 1969, brick was added, as well as new fixtures, carpeting, and a public address system. In 1977, a new roof was added, carpeting was laid in the educational annex, and folding doors were added.

The years between 1978 and 1986 were a time of rapid growth for Zion No. 1, Missionary Baptist Church. The congregation purchased three acres of land to expand the cemetery, and the central heating system was installed. A second educational annex, which includes a baptismal pool, was constructed. Previously, the Tennessee River had been used for baptizing new members.

The Reverend Wayne S. Bracy became the 16th and current pastor on February 8, 1992. He has brought a fervent spiritual atmosphere and a commitment to teaching and training to Zion No. 1.

I am pleased to congratulate the Zion No. 1, Missionary Baptist Church on the occasion of its 126th anniversary.